

## Message Text

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ACTION NEA-07

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 MC-02 ACDA-10 IGA-01 PM-03 EB-03  
DODE-00 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 NSCE-00 NSC-05 SP-02 PRS-01  
/049 W  
----- 090478 /20

R 220841Z DEC 76  
FM AMEMBASSY DACCA  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3026  
INFO AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

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LIMDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PFOR, MASS, BG, US  
SUBJECT: MILITARY SUPPLIES FOR BANGLADESH

REF: DACCA 6357

1. FOREIGN SECRETARY TABARAK HUSAIN ASKED ME TO SEE  
HIM DECEMBER 22 TO GIVE A FORMAL RESPONSE TO OUR  
OFFER OF A SURPLUS MINESWEEPER WHICH COULD BE  
CONVERTED TO A HYDROGRAPHIC RESEARCH SHIP. TABARAK  
SAID HE HAD DISCUSSED THIS MATTER IN DETAIL WITH  
GENERAL ZIA AND ADMIRAL KHAN. BOTH DEEPLY APPRECIATED  
OUR OFFER. HOWEVER, THEY FELT THEY HAD TO DECLINE  
SINCE THE SHIP WE HAD OFFERED WOULD NOT, IN THEIR  
VIEW, HOLD UP UNDER THE SEVERE CYLONIC STORMS  
WHICH OCCUR ALL TOO FREQUENTLY IN THE BAY OF BENGAL.  
ADMIRAL KHAN HAD STRESSED THAT A VESSEL SMALLER  
THAN 750 TONS WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO OPERATE IN THE  
BAY DURING THE RAINY SEASON. MOREOVER, THE  
HYDROGRAPHIC SHIP WAS INTENDED TO INVESTIGATE  
AND SURVEY COASTAL WATERS AND ECONOMIC RESOURCES.

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AS SUCH, IT SHOULD BE AT SEA FOR A MINIMUM OF  
220 DAYS A YEAR AND SHOULD THUS HAVE THE CAPACITY  
TO CARRY MORE FUEL, WATER, PERSONNEL AND OTHER  
SUPPLIES THAN WOULD BE POSSIBLE IN THE CASE OF  
THE SHIP WE HAD OFFERED. ADMIRAL KHAN AND GENERAL  
ZIA VERY MUCH HOPED WE WOULD BE ABLE TO MAKE A

VESSEL AVAILABLE IN THE 750 TO 1,000 TON RANGE.

2. TABARAK SAID HE HAD ALSO BEEN ASKED TO INFORM ME THAT, WHILE THE MINESWEEPER WAS NOT SUITABLE FOR HYDROGRAPHIC RESEARCH IN THE BAY OF BENGAL, THE BDG WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HAVE IT TO USE FOR ITS ORIGINAL PURPOSE. TABARAK NOTED THAT MINESWEEPERS ARE PURELY DEFENSIVE VESSELS AND SAID HE HOPED PROVIDING SUCH A SHIP WOULD BE WITHIN OUR POLICY GUIDELINES. HE SAID THAT IN ADDITION TO CLEARING CHANNELS FOR INNOCENT MECHANTMEN IF THIS SHOULD BECOME NECESSARY, THE MINESWEEPER WOULD BE USED FOR FISHERY PROTECTION AND NORMAL SURVEILLANCE DUTIES. THE BDG WOULD VERY MUCH LIKE TO HAVE IT UNDER THE TERMS WE HAD PROPOSED WITH ITS ORIGINAL EQUIPMENT IN TACT.

3. TURNING TO A RELATED TOPIC, TABARAK SAID HE ALSO WANTED TO STRESS THE IMPORTANCE WHICH THE BDG ATTACHED TO OBTAINING ADDITIONAL EQUIPMENT FOR THE AIR FORCE. HE NOTED THAT "DISRUPTIVE ELEMENTS" WERE CAPITALIZING ON DISSATISFACTION WITHIN THE ARMED FORCES OVER THE LACK OF EQUIPMENT WHICH WOULD ENABLE THEM TO FUNCTION AS PROFESSIONAL MILITARY MEN. WHILE THEIR EXPECTATIONS WERE MODEST, TABARAK SAID IT WAS ESSENTIAL THAT THE ARMED FORCES HAVE CERTAIN MINIMAL ITEMS OF EQUIPMENT TO COUNTER THE GROWING MORALE PROBLEM. OTHERWISE THERE MIGHT BE ANOTHER UPHEAVAL WITHIN THE MILITARY. TABARAK SAID HE RECOGNIZED THAT FIGHTER AIRCRAFT

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WERE OUT OF THE QUESTION BUT HE VERY MUCH HOPED WE COULD ASSIST WITH TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT AND PERHAPS HELICOPTERS. IN ADDITON TO DEFENSIVE MILITARY USES, THESE WOULD ALSO BE ESSENTIAL FOR DISASTER RELIEF AND OTHER ECONOMIC PURPOSES.

4. I TOLD TABARAK HE WAS RIGHT IN HIS ASSUMPTION THAT FIGHTER AIRCRAFT WERE OUT OF THE QUESTION. I RECOGNIZED THE NEED FOR IMPROVED TRANSPORT CAPABILITY IN A COUNTRY WHERE TRANSPORTATION IS AS POOR AS IN BANGLADESH, BUT SAID I VERY MUCH DOUBTED WE HAD EXCESS TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT OR HELICOPTERS. I NOTED THAT OUR ORIGINAL PLAN HAD BEEN THAT TECHNICAL LEVEL TALKS WOULD BE HELD IN WASHINGTON AFTER WE HAD RECEIVED AND ANALYZED THE BDG'S MODIFIED REQUIREMENTS LIST. WHILE WE COULD TALK ABOUT THE DETAILS OF MILITARY TRAINING AND THE HYDROGRAPHIC VESSEL HERE, I FELT IT WOULD BE PREFERABLE TO

TACKLE THE GENERAL SUBJECT OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT  
ON A COORDINATED BASIS DURING THESE TALKS RATHER  
THAN PIECemeAL. TABARAK AGREED.

5. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE ADVISE (1) WHETHER WE  
HAVE A SHIP IN THE 750 TO 1,000 TON RANGE WHICH COULD  
BE MADE AVAILABLE TO BANGLADESH FOR CONVERSION TO  
A HYDROGRAPHIC RESEARCH VESSEL; (2) WHETHER WE COULD  
MAKE THE MINESWEEPER AVAILABLE FOR USE UNDER ITS  
ORIGINAL MISSION; AND (3) WHEN WASHINGTON WOULD BE  
PREPARED TO RECEIVE THE TECHNICAL TEAM FROM  
BANGLADESH TO DISCUSS THE LIST SUBMITTED BY  
ADMIRAL KHAN.

MASTERS

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## Message Attributes

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